

WHO'S GUILTY?

By arrangement with the Pathe Exchange The West Virginian each Saturday for a number of weeks will present a novelized version of a photoplay, the scenario of which was written by Mrs. Wilson Woodrow. These stories will each be complete in themselves, but the whole will consist of a powerful expose of existing social and economic ills. The pictures will be shown at the Ideal Theatre on the Thursday following the day of publication.

WHO'S GUILTY?

by MRS. WILSON WOODROW

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NOVELIZED FROM THE SERIES OF PHOTOPLAYS OF THE SAME NAME RELEASED BY PATHE EXCHANGE.

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FOURTEENTH STORY

The Irony of Justice.

It began on Halloween—on the night when Tom Morrissey finished his apprenticeship and received a union card as a full-fledged journeyman printer. With the card he had received a job in the big shop where his apprenticeship had been served. It was a splendid job, too, for a boy of twenty—a job that would scare away the bogey of poverty which had haunted Tom ever since the day, two years earlier, when his father had died, leaving his only son with a widowed mother and a pretty sister to support.

Tom Morrissey was hurrying home right gleefully from the shop when, rounding a corner, he came upon a group of boys who were dancing around a Halloween bonfire. The blaze roared merrily. The boys greeted with cheers each new member of their group who arrived with an armful of fresh fuel.

The cheers swelled to a howl of delight, as two young fellows ran toward the fire from a side street, carrying between them a big wooden gate they had dexterously lifted from its place in front of some unguarded house.

As the two gate stealers trotted forward and cast their burden on the fire, Tom recognized one of them as Henry Rokeson, a youth several years older than himself—son of the town's foremost lawyer-politician.

Tom also saw what none of the bonfire-builders at first noted. Namely, that a policeman (who evidently had watched the gate robbers from a distance) was running toward the merry-makers.

Before Tom could call a warning, the policeman charged down upon the lads. One of them yelled: "Beat it!" and the group melted as if by magic.

One of them—Henry Rokeson—dashed across the street toward the invitingly open entrance to an alley. As he ran past Tom, his toe caught on the edge of the curb, and he sprawled headlong.

Tom stooped to lift young Rokeson to his feet. But the moment's delay had been enough for the policeman to overtake him. The bluecoat nabbed Henry by the collar, shaking him into submission. In the same movement he seized Tom Morrissey.

"In the name of the law!" spluttered the officer. "And if either of you resist, I'll pull my gun on you. I saw the two of you pinch that gate."

"You did not," denied Tom, indignantly. "I'm just on my way from the shop. I stopped here, a second, to watch—"

"You didn't see me do it," declared Henry Rokeson. "I was on my way home from my father's office, when I noticed this fellow and another boy going toward the fire, with a gate between them, when—"

"You saw me doing that?" gasped Tom incredulously.

"I did," reiterated Henry, "and I'm ready to swear to it. I—"

"Come along, the both of you!" broke in the policeman. "You can tell it tomorrow to the judge."

At the town's single police station (under the city hall) the two boys



The Little Household Was Ideally Happy.

were arraigned before a grumpy lieutenant and then consigned to the same cell.

Henry Rokeson, by means of a five-dollar tip to the doorman, had a telephone message sent to his father, Tom Morrissey, not wanting to worry his mother and sister, made no effort to send word to them.

As soon as he and his cellmate were left alone together in their barred cub-

byhole, Tom turned fiercely to young Rokeson:

"What did you tell that lie for?" he demanded. "Why did you say you saw me steal the gate?"

"What did you trip me for, as I ducked past you?" countered Henry, with equal fierceness. "And then why did you grab me and hold me till the cop could catch up with us?"

"I didn't!" cried Tom. "You stumbled on the curb, just in front of me. I was trying to help you up, when—"

The door of their cell swung open. The lieutenant and the doorman and a well-dressed man in civilian clothes stood in the dim-lit corridor outside. Tom recognized the civilian as Hinkle Rokeson, whom he had often seen on the street.

The erstwhile austere lieutenant was positively wriggling with embarrassment as he addressed Henry Rokeson.

"Mr. Rokeson," he said, "Officer Harding made one of his bonehead breaks when he arrested you. I hope you'll accept the apologies of the police department."

Next morning (on the testimony of Patrolman Harding) a wise and just magistrate—former law partner of Hinkle Rokeson—solemnly imposed a fine of ten dollars upon Tom Morrissey, adding a lecture and an admonition that next time it would go harder with the young criminal.

The four ensuing years brought peace and simple prosperity to the Morrissey household. Tom worked hard and efficiently at his trade.

As a result he was able to buy on installments a pretty cottage on Hudson lane, where he installed his invalid mother and sister, Mabel.

The little household in the Hudson lane cottage was ideally happy. The sickly mother, in her own home at last and with her beloved flower-beds to keep her outdoors, grew daily stronger. Mabel, studying at the normal school, grew into graceful and beautiful young womanhood.

Tom, in his free hours, helped his mother with her tiny flower gardens and Mabel with her lessons, or taught new tricks to his fluffy yellow mongrel puppy, "Hutch." He was gloriously content with life.

Hudson lane backed up against Harvard street, the town's most pretentious thoroughfare. Thus, Tom's back garden was separated only by a picket fence and hedge from the rear grounds of a huge and showy mansion that stood on Harvard street. This mansion's grounds, indeed, ran back all the way to Hudson lane, on both sides of Tom's little patch of land.

The mansion was owned by Hinkle Rokeson. At the extreme rear of his grounds, fronting on Hudson lane, he maintained his kennel of prize-winning bulldogs.

One June afternoon, a few minutes before six o'clock, Tom Morrissey returned from work.

In the garden Mrs. Morrissey and Mabel were bending over a flower bed, rearranging some uprooted nasturtium plants.

His mother, looking up from her task at the lower bed, met his smile and called out a word of tender welcome to him.

"We didn't expect you home so early," she said as Tom bent down to kiss her and to run a playfully affectionate hand through Mabel's curly hair.

"Why are you replanting the nasturtiums?" asked her son. "They seemed to be doing so well."

"They were," said Mabel, "but today some of those prize chickens of the Rokesons got out of their coop and flew over the fence into our yard and scratched up every nasturtium in the whole bed. Wasn't it horrid?"

"Too bad!" sympathized Tom, "but I'll replant the rest of them, now that I'm here. You and Mabel rest on the porch and do the 'heavy looking on.'"

"Heavy looking on, indeed!" scoffed his mother. "Do you realize I have the supper to get ready? There will be only you and I to eat it tonight. Mabel is going to supper at the Paynters! And afterward she and Elsie Paynter are going to a dance at the pavilion."

As he bent to his garden work, Tom heard two men's voices in conversation on the far side of the picket fence that divided his lot from the end of the Rokeson grounds in which the kennels were situated. He recognized the voices as those of Hinkle Rokeson and Henry. They were evidently inspecting the kennels.

"Bring out old Champion Colborn," Tom presently heard Henry order the kennel man. "I want to look at that barred-wire scratch on his shoulder."

Tom, turning his head, saw the kennel man open a heavy-wire door in one of the enclosures. Out trotted a massive white bulldog, perhaps eighty pounds in weight, huge muscles bulging through the surface of his glossy white hide.

At sight of his master, the great dog bounded forward, wagging his stumpy tail in joyous greeting, leaping up at Henry for caress. His splayed paws brushed against Henry's flannel trousers, leaving dusty marks on the white cloth.

Henry, with an exasperated curse at the affectionate brute's awkwardness, swung back one buckskin-clad foot and delivered a tremendous kick on the dog's throat. Both father and son chuckled with laughter as Champion Colborn tumbled prone into the dust, under the cruel impact, and then limped crestfallen back into his kennel.

Tom went on with his planting. A minute later, Mabel emerged from the cottage. Calling out a cheery good-by to her brother, she walked down the short garden path to the street gate.

Tom's yellow puppy had followed her from the house and now frisked along in front of her, gleeful in the prospect of a walk. But at the gate she sent him back, calling:

"No, no, Hutchie! Go back to master. You can't walk with me this evening."

Chagrined, but optimistic, the puppy obeyed. He trotted over to Tom. The boy patted him on the head, then went on working. The puppy, finding no one had time to play with him, decided to go for a walk on his own account.

He ran to the gate. Mabel had neglected to close it tightly. A few scientific butts of Hutch's furry nose pushed it open wide enough for him to wriggle out.

Mabel was no longer in sight on Hudson lane, having turned the corner a block above. Hutch cantered on in happy search for adventure. He was not long in finding it.

Tom heard Henry Rokeson say, in amused excitement to the kennel man: "Let Champion Colborn out again. Quick! And open the gate in the hedge that leads into Hudson lane."

To his father, Rokeson explained: "That mongrel yellow mutt of Morrissey's is out on the sidewalk. Watch some fun!"

Tom jumped to his feet and ran to his own gate. But, fast as he ran,

introduction to Mabel followed. Mabel was anything but happy to meet the man who had once done her brother such a bad turn. But Henry Rokeson could be extremely fascinating when he chose.

In less than ten minutes Mabel found her early resentment against him fading to nothingness. He was magnetic, brilliant, altogether delightful—to her unsophisticated way of thinking.

When the last dance was over he begged leave to take the girl to her home in his runabout. Reluctantly and against her wiser impulses, she consented.

When the all-too-brief ride ended at the Morrissey gate, Henry helped Mabel from the car and walked up the path to the porch at her side.

Tom had found Mabel's latchkey on the hall table. Knowing she had forgotten it, he had sat up to open the front door for her. Now, hearing the motor stop, he looked out of an upper window. To his amazement, he saw his sister coming toward the house with the last man in the world with whom he would have expected to see her. He ran downstairs to the front door to let Mabel in.

Meantime, she and Henry had paused at the top of the front steps, while the girl groped in her handbag for the forgotten latchkey.

Henry Rokeson, scarce knowing what he did, threw his arms about her. She wrenched herself free, with an exclamation of alarm just as Tom opened the door. Henry, blind to all except his love for her, cried out:

"Sweetheart, I love you! I want you to marry me!"

He caught her again in his arms. As he did so he felt himself whirled backward and away from her with a force that sent him banging against a post of the veranda.

In front of him stood Tom Morrissey, white and coldly resolute.

"Keep your hands off my sister," commanded Tom, very quietly. "We do not want men of your sort around our home. Please go."

"Go?" bellowed Henry, insane rage gripping him at this interruption to his love-making, and at the humiliation

to which he had just been subjected in the presence of the frightened girl. "Go, eh? I go or stay as I please. You've seen how I treat mongrel curs. Take warning by it."

He mistook Tom's calm self-control for cowardice, and enforced his angry retort by a smashing blow at Morrissey's face.

But Tom, sidestepping the blow, landed a short-arm left hander between his assailant's eyes.

He struck too high to score a knockout. But he broke the bridge of Henry's nose and sent him reeling backward under the trained muscular drive of his fist.

Henry's reeling feet missed the top step. He fell sprawling into the brambly heart of the very rose bush under which poor little Hutch lay buried.

Painfully Henry Rokeson crawled to his feet, holding two very badly scratched hands over his broken nose.

In his heart blazed a murderous undying hatred for his conqueror. Glaring up at Tom, from between his puffing and blackened lids, Henry gasped incoherently:

"I'll get you for that! I'll get you, if it takes my last breath and my father's last dollar and last scrap of influence. I'll get you!"

Henry Rokeson—disheveled, his face distorted with swelling and with fury—stamped into his father's study, three minutes later.

"Look at me!" he gurgled, choking. "Look at me! That Morrissey swine did this. He—"

His father broke into amazed questioning. But Henry cut him short.

"You've been wanting me to accept that chance to go to Vienna, as attached to the United States embassy there. I didn't want to go, in spite of your saying it meant a big career for me. I don't want to, even yet. But I'll make a bargain with you: I'll go to Vienna, without any further kick, if you will find a way, first, to send Morrissey to jail. Get him a prison sentence for what he's done to me, and I'll start for Vienna the day after he's sentenced."

"I'll do it!" said the elder Rokeson eagerly. "I ought to have pulled enough in this town to set pretty much what

I want. Did he attack you on the street or in—?"

"On his own doorstep," was the sulky admission, "and I struck him first."

"Good Lord! Were there witnesses?"

"There was—a witness," muttered Henry, a vision of Mabel's fear-stricken face rising before him.

"And you want me to get him jailed for that?" stormed his father in disgust. "Why, man, you'll be lucky if he doesn't swear out a warrant against you!"

"He won't," said Henry briefly, "and if I am going to Vienna, he must be sent to jail before I go."

"It's a big order," reflected his father. "We must take time to think up some way. I see none, yet."

The very next afternoon both the Rokesons "saw the way."

Tom, coming home from work, found six of the Rokeson chickens busily depopulating his mother's flower garden. He chased them across the yard.

Five of them flew over the back fence, but one seemed inclined to jump back into the Morrissey yard.

Tom, in exasperation, picked up a stone and flung it at the bird, to hasten its departure. The stone missed its mark and whizzed over into the Rokeson grounds.

By a luckless fate, Henry Rokeson and his father chanced to be strolling, side by side, toward the kennels. The random-flying stone struck the elder Rokeson sharply in the face, cutting the skin slightly, and bruising the surrounding flesh.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" called Tom, in quick contrition. "It was an accident. It—"

"It was an accident," interrupted Rokeson, turning in grim triumph to his son, and stanching the few drops of blood on his cut cheek, "that will send you to Vienna, Henry, my boy. You witnessed the assault!"

"I surely did!" cried Henry, catching the idea.

An hour later, Tom Morrissey was arrested on a warrant charging him with "assault with intent to kill."

Tom found himself railroaded to state's prison on a two-year sentence—with a suddenness that left him bewildered and breathless.

Nor, thanks to the Rokeson influence, did he go to prison, unaccompanied. The warden—another Rokeson appointee—was informed that Tom was an unwontedly brutal and hardened criminal and that Rokeson would like to see him well disciplined.

That was Tom Morrissey's introduction to a living death—to extra "hard labor"—to extra penalties, to a course of treatment warranted to crush the hardest spirit. In short, to the mercy of the merciless.

Tom was released from prison at the end of his term, and was sent back to his native town with the knowledge that the Rokeson-ruled police had instructions to watch him as a dangerous character.

His once-buoyant step had taken on the "prison drag." His formerly square shoulders were bent. His tanned and ruddy complexion was sallow. His eyes were lack-luster and as hopeless as those of a beaten dog. His heart was dead within him. On his flesh were scars that bore witness to nameless cruelties.

Thus marred, body and soul, he was turned out upon a world that had been forewarned to shun or punish him. In short, he was an ex-convict. And hundreds, just like him, are sent forth from prisons, every day, to take up again the burden of life with just the same hideous handicap.

Another event of local importance occurred on the day of Tom's release. Henry Rokeson came home from Vienna. His term of service, as attaché there, had expired. His father had died six months earlier. And Henry had come back to take into his hands the reins of civic and financial power that had slipped from Hinkle Rokeson's dead fingers.

He made inquiries about Mabel, through a detective agency. And, within two hours, he had learned the uninspiring history of the girl's life during the past two years.

Tom's trial—fruitless as his defense had proven—had eaten deep into his savings. On his departure to prison the little cottage had been given up by his mother and sister; since they could no longer continue paying the loan association's installments upon it. They had moved to a cheap three-room suite in a poor quarter of the town. And Mabel had sought work in a neighboring box factory.

And now a new complication had arisen. Mrs. Morrissey, always delicate, had fallen seriously ill. The doctor had said that nothing but a year in the Adirondacks could save her. And "a year in the Adirondacks" is not paid for out of the wages of a box factory operative.

All this, Henry Rokeson learned, and smiled contentedly as he heard the report. Then he wrote a note and dispatched it to Mabel at the box factory by his own valet.

Mabel was starting for home at the end of a hard day's work, when the note was handed to her. She read it as she walked homeward. Half aloud, and in cross wonder, she read:

"Dear Miss Morrissey: I have just returned from Europe, and chanced to hear, this noon, of your financial plight. If you will do me the honor to call at my house at 8:30 this evening, I should like to talk over with you a position that will bring you in more than enough money to send your mother to the Adirondacks."

"I trust you will avail yourself of this opportunity, as it will permit me to atone, in part, for the past, and to prove my regret for my father's un-

just persecution of your unhappy brother. I am anxious to make amends. Won't you give me the chance? If not for my own sake for your sick mother's? Faithfully yours, "HENRY ROKESON."

Mabel thrust the letter into the bosom of her blouse. She was desperate over her mother's illness. Much as she loathed the idea of accepting help from Henry Rokeson, or of aiding him to lessen his very just remorse, she felt she had no right to decline the offer. Her mother's life might depend on it.

Up the long stairs to their tenement home she hurried, forcing herself to smile cheerily as she entered her mother's room. As soon as supper was eaten and cleared away, she made an excuse to go out.

Two minutes later Tom came home. Opening the door of the suite he looked about him in horror at the squalid poverty of the rooms. Then with a cry of "Mother! Mother!" he flung himself upon his knees at Mrs. Morrissey's bedside.

With his mother's arms about his neck and his mother's dear voice whispering love words in his ear, he was, for the moment, almost happy; for the first time in two fearful years. Presently, he asked:

"Where is Mabel?"

"She had to go out to see about a position," said his mother. "She will be back in a little while. Go to the kitchen and get yourself some supper."

As he crossed the kitchen Tom's eye fell upon a crumpled letter that lay on the floor where it had dropped from Mabel's blouse. He picked it up—its envelope was gone—and his eye fell on Henry Rokeson's signature. In unbelieving dismay he read the mislabeled. Then, snatching up his hat he rushed from the house.

Mabel, arriving at the Rokeson mansion, was conducted by a man servant to the library where Henry sat awaiting her. He rose eagerly to greet her. She ignored his outstretched hand and said coldly in reply to his fervid greeting:

"You said you had a position to offer me. If it is within my power to accept it, I must do so. My mother's life depends on it. What is the position, please?"

"I want you to be my wife," he answered, abruptly. "I love you. I have always loved you. As my wife you will have enough money to—"

"You wrote about a 'position'!" she interrupted, unheeding. "Please tell me what it is."

"The position of my wife. I—"

"I would rather starve," she retorted, turning to leave the room. "Good night."

She made as though to pass through the doorway. But he clasped her in his arms, imploring her to reconsider, and declaring over and over his admiration for her. She struggled vainly to free herself. Their swaying and interlocked figures were silhouetted for an instant against a lowered window shade.

At the same moment a step sounded on the veranda outside. A hand tugged at the fastenings of the window. Henry switched off the lights, dragged Mabel from the room and thrust her out of the house by the front doorway. Then, calling his valet, he ran back into the library and turned on the light again just as Tom Morrissey burst in through the window.

"Where is my sister, you bound?" yelled Tom, springing at him. "What have you done with her?"

He grappled fiercely with Henry, seizing him by the throat as though seeking to tear the truth from him.

The valet, snatched up a chair and brought it crashing down upon Tom's head. Tom, stunned and helpless, collapsed to the floor.

His first thought, when he came to his senses, an hour later, in a police station cell, was:

"I can't tell the truth about it without bringing Mabel's name into the story. For her sake I must keep silent."

Six weeks later Tom Morrissey—tried and convicted on charge of housebreaking and assault—faced a judge; for the third time in his twenty-five years of life.

"Thomas Morrissey," said the judge, solemnly, "a jury of your peers has found you guilty. This is your third conviction in six years. You are a hardened and confirmed criminal. It is my painful duty to sentence you to a minimum of twenty years' imprisonment at hard labor."

And not only the Rokesons' and their kind are to blame in similar situations but many more must share the burden when it really is determined, "Who's Guilty?"

(END OF "WHO'S GUILTY?" SERIES.)

BITS OF STATE NEWS

In many counties in the southern tier of this state, stick weeds have done thousands of dollars of damage to valuable farm lands. The weeds in places have become so prolific that farmers will make an appeal to the next legislature to pass a law requiring their destruction.

The Virginia Power company through its general manager, H. G. Scott, has announced that its plant at Cabin Creek Junction which was damaged by the flood recently, will be made more important by the installation of two additional units of 30,000 horse-power each. The plant now contains two units of 10,000 horse-power each and to operate them uses 30,000 tons of coal annually.

According to an opinion of the West Virginia supreme court of appeal holidays, in a certain sense, are extended judicial days. The question was disposed of when the higher court affirmed the circuit court of Tyler county in its decision in the case of Bennett against the Farmers Mutual Fire association. In writing the opinion in this case, Judge George Postenberger says: "If it so happens that a rule day of a circuit court occurs on a holiday and a term of the court begins on next day, the rules extend through such next day by virtue of the postponement of extension. In the rule days of a court extend into a term, as in this case, the office judgment entered there does not become final until the last day of the term succeeding the one so invaded by the rules and it cannot be properly entered as final in the absence of the defendant, until such succeeding term."

The last stretch of unoccupied river frontage on the Ohio river between Pittsburgh and Wheeling is about to be opened up, according to an announcement made by Ralph W. Cooke, Industrial Agent, Pennsylvania Lines West of Pittsburgh. A new line (twelve miles in length) is to be constructed by the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railway company (Pan Handle), commencing at Chester, W. Va., and skirting the south bank of the Ohio river east as far as the mouth of Raccoon creek, which is about three miles below Beaver. The Pan Handle now has a branch, known as its New Cumberland branch, from New Cumberland Junction, just east of St. Albans on the main line, north through the thriving industrial towns of Weirton, New Cumberland and Chester, a distance of approximately twenty-three miles and the new line will be a continuation of this branch.

E. D. K's Column

Mary Pickford the beautiful "movie" actress, says:

"It is easy for a pretty girl to be good if she is rich, but a pretty girl who is poor has a lot of temptations. The pretty girl who is poor is a little bit in the position of the boy in the grocery store."

"A grocer leaned over the counter and yelled at the boy who stood close to an apple barrel: 'Are you trying to steal them apples boy?'"

"No, sir," the boy faltered. "I'm tryin' not to."

THE CHAP WHO COURTS MORE THAN ONE GIRL AT A TIME IS COURTING TROUBLE.

A SENSIBLE START. The couple were married at the home of the bride's parents, where they will remain until the bridegroom gets a job.—The Centralia (Mo.) Courier.

HAD TO OBEY ORDERS. An old colored uncle was found by the preacher prowling in his barnyard late one night.

"Uncle Calhoun," said the preacher sternly, "it can't be good for your rheumatism to be prowling around here in the rain and cold."

"Doctors orders, sah," the old man answered.

"Doctors orders?" said the preacher. "Did he tell you to go prowling around all night?"

"No sah, not exactly, sah," said Uncle Cal; "but he done ordered me chicken broth."

FACETIOUS. It is announced that in a new building to be erected in this city in which there are to be bachelor quarters, a dumb waiter is to be installed. It would be well too if she was deaf and blind.—The Sapulpa (Okla.) Herald.

Hear C. J. Schuck, of Wheeling, and Senator Meredith discuss the issues of the campaign at Fairview tonight.

